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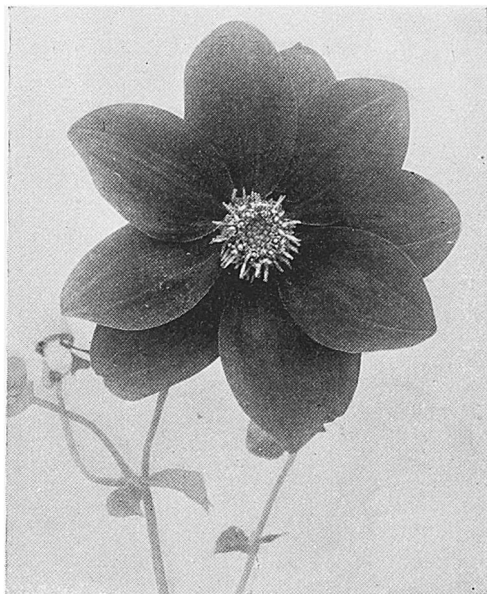
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IN A VILLAGE GARDEN

BY CHARLES C. ABBOTT, M. D.

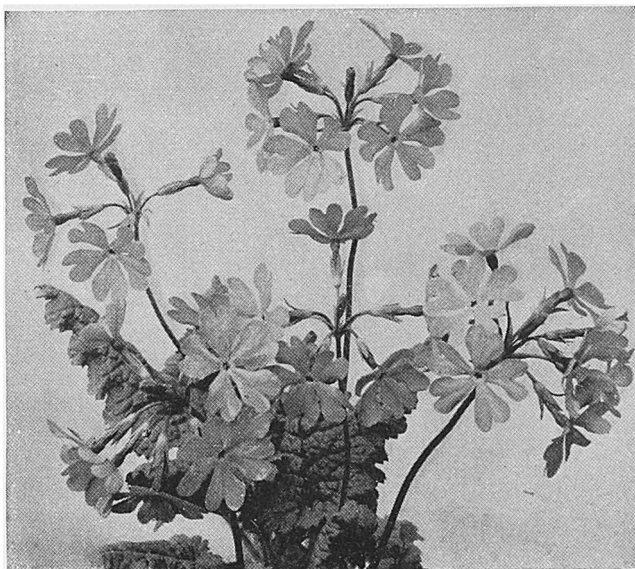
Illustrated from photographs of natural flowers by Pitcher and Manda.



A SINGLE DAHLIA

ON the outskirts of a certain old village stands a quaint cottage, built in the last century and as yet unmarred by any modern improvements. Most appropriately, it is occupied by old people. A weather-beaten board at the little gate has painted upon it, "Cakes and Beer," and not a youngster in the neighborhood, nor an adult either, but will testify to the excellence of the foaming beverage and spicy ginger-bread that is ever ready for the hungry and thirsty wayfarer. For many and many a year there has been a constant dropping of pennies upon the little counter or into the wrinkled palm of Aunt Peggy, whose "Thank thee" is veritable music to him who recalls it, as the same voice that sounded so sweetly in the long-gone unappreciative days of early childhood.

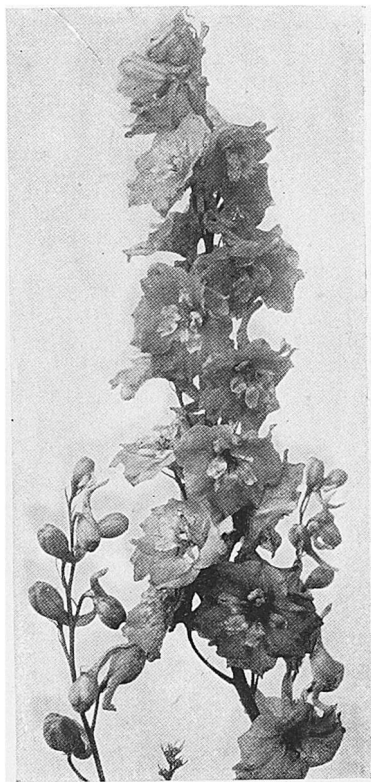
In the course of my ramble to-day, I passed by that quaint cottage for the thousandth time, perhaps, and seeing the back door open, caught a glimpse of the old garden, in which I had not been for almost half a century. It was the same garden. A narrow path, margined by stunted box, led to the open well, with thick mats of moss about the stepping-stones that faced the curb; and where the few vegetables had not been planted, there was a wealth of flowers, in full blow, in bud, and, though so near the end of summer, with a promise of abundant blossoms yet to appear.



PRIMROSES

DWARF WHITE PHLOX (*PHLOX PANICULATA*)

A crooked cedar post by the well was not the least attractive feature. A coral honeysuckle and a trumpet-creeper struggled for supremacy, and both were well laden with bright flowers. How the humming-birds buzzed about them,—not fighting, but forever threatening, I thought; and the bees, butterflies, dragon-flies and beetles,—what goodly store of sweets they all found, and not for an instant was there positive silence. Their humming was incessant and made excellent bass when the treble of joyous birds sounded from the thick-set shrubbery.



LARKSPURS

The day is not far off when Aunt Peggy and her husband will pass away, and the old



RUDBECKIA SPECIOSA

garden so long a landmark, become a matter of local history only. Place and people, the old cottage and its occupants are so well fitted to each other, that we cannot dissociate them; but young people here would be out of place. A new roof must cover young heads, it seems. The old is forever giving way, but is it always to better as well as newer things? New flowers, at least, are not an improvement upon the old. What has the present to show that is an advance over an old apple-tree and the blue-birds? Certainly not the English sparrow and japonica hedge.

But this is not the time or place to be sadly retrospective. What of the good gifts of the passing moment? What of the flowers of a passing summer? I noticed that the Eng-

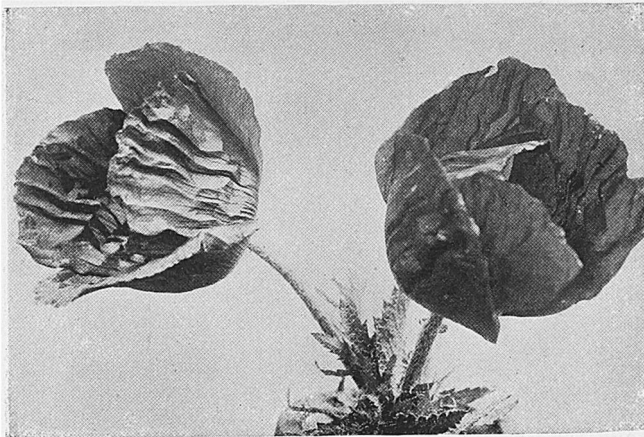
lish primrose had had its day and the poppies were past their prime. The flaming phlox was no longer the principal feature, as it had been, and the spiræas were only a thrifty growth, in which the song-sparrows still lingered although their nests were empty. But what a show of dahlias and hollyhocks! The sight was a dazzling one. Crimson, gold, white, and delicate shades of pink and purple lined the lichen-coated fence, that was almost concealed by the stout stalks of these showy plants. And how natural was the remark of Aunt Peggy,—

“They ain’t as pretty as last summer, somehow the season wasn’t quite right.” Did the man or woman ever live who was quite contented with what is? How flowers could be brighter, I cannot imagine; and how the trim gardens of a later day pale in comparison!

It should be remembered, too, that many of our native wild-flowers can very readily be transplanted and will flourish



A CLEMATIS BLOSSOM



A POPPY (PAPAVER INVOLUCRATA MAXIMA)



A HOLLYHOCK BLOSSOM

showy cone-flower (*Rudbeckia*) that had been brought from the near-by meadows, and in one corner of the garden there was a thrifty centaury, now a mass of bright, pink-purple bloom. Why this latter flower is so generally overlooked is a marvel to me. Few exotics with similarly colored blossoms can compare with it.

"I have flowers from April to the end of fall," said Aunt Peggy, when she returned, "and I don't have no favorites; they're all good enough for me, and what I like best, if there is any choice, is them I remember the longest. I'm just young again when the yellow rose comes out in May."

As she spoke, a little housewren filled the garden with melody and I fancied that Auntie thought of the days when she was young, she had such a far-off look, as the bird was singing.

"Shop!" rang out in the perfume-laden air and Aunt

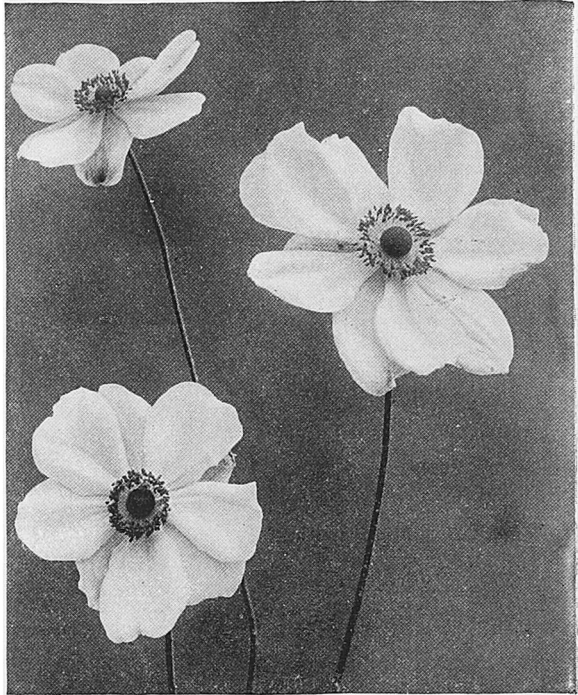
even better in gardens than in the fields or meadows where the struggle for existence is fierce. Our native plants, like our native birds, are not sufficiently well known. In this matter, our grandfathers were wiser than we. They had a loving regard for many a wild growth and garden-flower now almost unknown.

The arrival of a customer caused me to be left alone for a short time, and sitting by the well I naturally drifted into dreams of other days. Have we been wise, I mused, in discarding so much that characterized old times? even in such a matter as the garden-flowers? My eyes fall upon the



HOLLYHOCKS

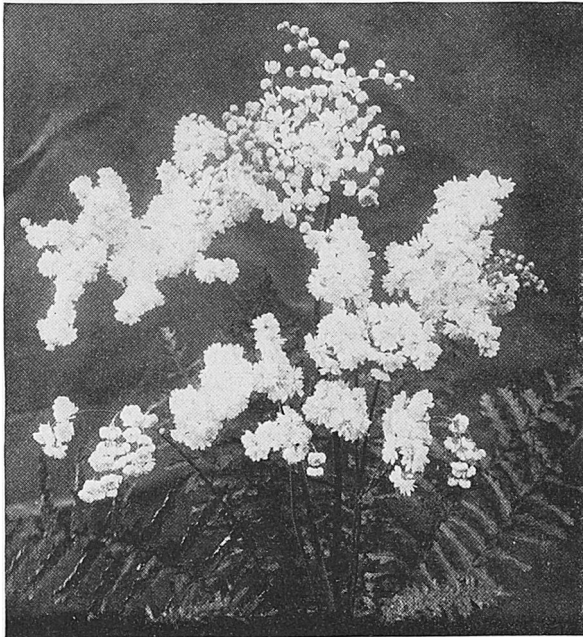
Peggy was gone. It was a hot day, and everybody was thirsty, so again I was alone. Looking about me, I saw the wren's mossy mansion near the kitchen door, and above it, on the eaves, was a box of house-leek, that drooped gracefully and shaded the little minstrel's home. It was a pretty sight. And then I turned to the fields beyond the garden's boundary, and here too were August flowers in abundance. The climbing bittersweet (*Celastrus scandens*) almost hedged them in, and along the brook tall bonesets and Joe-Pye-weeds flourished in tropical luxuriance, but not to the exclusion of other flowers, while slender lizard's-tail (*Saururus*) and golden dodder added their brilliance to the painted meadow.



A WHITE ANEMONE (ANEMONE JAPONICA)

How well these wild flowers keep the record of the year! Were all almanacs lost and every clock destroyed, the time of year and time of day could be closely

reckoned, except in winter, by the coming and going of the flowers.



SPIRÆA FILIPENDULA PLENA

Leaving the garden, I was soon on the well-kept lawn of a pretentious house. Not a weed had escaped the lawnmower, and the grass was but a green carpet that hid the earth. But here everything was too evident of man's presence, and too little of unrestrained nature, to be pleasing to one who loves the fields and hedgerows best of all. I could not withhold my admiration of many a strange exotic bloom, but in my memory still lingers the simpler charms of the quaint old village garden, wherein I had lovingly lingered.



Drawn by Woldemar Frederick

THE WILD HUNTSMAN. VII.—VOLRAT MEETS THE COUNT

Hackelberend, running ahead of his men, surprises Volrat hunting in his woods. Volrat seizes the chance to punish the Count, but is overcome, whereupon the Count's men tie him on the back of a captured deer, and turn the animal loose.